

"It is only a waiter; he doesn't count. Friendship?" He laughed.

"Please!" still struggling.

"Not till you tell me why you sent that telegram."

She pressed her palms against him and stood away. She looked bravely into his eyes now.

"I sent it because I wanted you, because I am tired of lying to my heart, because I have a right to be happy, because—because I love you! Take me, and oh! be good and kind to me, for I have been very lonely and unhappy. . . . Kiss me!" with a touch of the old imperiousness.

The rim of the early moon shouldered above the frowning death-mask of Napoleon, the huge salmon-tinted mountain on the far side of the Lecco. In the villages the day-sounds had given way to the more peaceful voices of the night. They could hear the occasional light laughter of the gardeners on the second race; the bark of a dog in the hills; from the house of the silk-weaver came the tinkle of a guitar. In the houses on the hill opposite and in the villages below the first lights of evening began to glimmer, now here, now there, like fireflies become stationary.

"See Naples and die," she whispered, "but the spirit will come to Bellaggio."

THE END